



Maudsley
Learning

The Autism Core Capabilities
rEPosiTory (ACCEPT) Project:
Executive Summary and Highlights

Created By: Maudsley Learning

Published: July 2021

Our partners

Maudsley Learning



Maudsley Learning

Maudsley Learning is a mental health training centre within South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience. Our mission is to produce the highest quality mental health and wellbeing education and training products.

Maudsley Learning ORTUS Conferencing and Events Venue 82-96 Grove Lane London SE5 8SN

www.maudsleylearning.com/ Twitter: @maudsleylearn, Facebook: www.facebook.com/Maudsleylearn/

The Estia Centre



[The Estia Centre at South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust](#) is a market leader in training and research in mental health, intellectual disabilities (ID), and autism. The Estia Centre provides training at scale to local and national NHS teams, statutory and non-statutory services, and voluntary organisations.

The Estia Centre, Denmark Hill, Camberwell, London, SE5 8AZ

Twitter: @estia_centre, EstiaCentre@slam.nhs.uk

Autistica



Autistica is the UK's national autism research charity, focusing on giving autistic people the opportunity to live long, happy, healthy lives.

Autistica, CAN Mezzanine, 7-12 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YR

Tel: +44 (0)20 3857 4340 E: friends@autistica.org.uk

<https://www.autistica.org.uk/> Twitter: @Autistica, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Autisticacharity>

Health Education England



Health Education England (HEE) exists for one reason only: to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the patients and public of England. This is achieved by ensuring that the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

Health Education England, 1st Floor, Blenheim House, Duncombe Street Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS1 4PL

www.hee.nhs.uk Twitter: @NHS_HealthEdEng, Facebook: www.facebook.com/nhshee

Acknowledgements:

This work was funded and supported by [Health Education England Intellectual disabilities](#) programme. The project team would like to sincerely thank all participants for their contribution to this exciting project.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Co-production was at the **heart of our project** with autistic people being involved in almost every aspect of the project.
- Almost **500 participants** were involved in our data collection methods, **almost half** of all participants **were autistic**, and the other half were **trainers** who deliver autism training and **professionals across all sectors** including education, health and social care working with autistic people
- **Over 200 autism training providers** were contacted about the project, 30 training providers were included in the training directory with 128 courses that aligned to the Core Capabilities Framework
- There was a general census regarding the findings and recommendations from all participant groups including, autistic people, their family members and carers, professionals and trainers
- Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone, the NHS and this project, there were some interesting findings and positive changes made as a result of it
- Many autism training providers will continue to delivery digital deliver as well as face to face. This has resulted in **training being more accessible** not just for professionals but also for autistic people to become involved in training

- Practical and realistic recommendations to HEE were made to increase awareness and use of the Core Capabilities Framework
- Several gaps relating to autism training were identified, including themes surrounding core content of training, specialist training for professionals, specialist training content, autistic people involved in training, use of terminology (autistic people vs people with autism), methods of training, and evaluation
- **13 recommendations** were suggested to Health Education England address gaps and improve training provisions in order to continue to develop and upskill the workforce
- **9 recommendations** were suggested to Commissioner to improve training provisions to support continued workforce development
- **8 recommendations** were suggested to educators providing autism training.
- There are available easy read versions of: The full report, the national survey, training directory summary, and the gap analysis
- Maudsley learning hosted a virtual conference to “launch The core capabilities framework project” with almost 500 participants registered and almost 300 people attending
- A Repository of resources has been created to facilitate and support the use of the Core Capabilities Framework

Executive summary

Background

It is estimated that 700,000 people in the United Kingdom, including 1 in 100 children, have an autism diagnosis (BMA, 2020). Autistic people are at higher risk of multimorbidity and have a decreased life expectancy compared the general population (Bishop-Fitzpatrick & Kind, 2017). These disparities are unnecessary and avoidable.

The Core Capabilities Framework for Supporting Autistic People (CCF; HEE 2019) describes the core capabilities that are required for the workforce. The framework defines three tiers: tier one is for those who require a general understanding of autism, tier two is aimed at those who provide care and support for autistic people but are not autism specialists, and tier three is most relevant to those who work intensively with autistic people.

The aim of this project was to:

- Identify a representative range of effective approaches that align with the CCF.
- Identify gaps in approaches for any workforce group that cannot be supported via alternative existing approaches or initiatives.
- Gain an understanding of how to increase awareness and use of the CCF.

Methods

This project included a national survey with over 370 participants. Participant groups include autistic people, their family members and carers, professional in public facing positions, and trainers who provide autism training. Additionally, 4 focus groups and 12 interviews were conducted with these participant groups (n=24) to gain an in-depth understanding of current autism training initiatives, gaps and barriers in training, how the CCF is currently being used, and how to increase awareness and use of the CCF.

Findings

Quantitative data from the national survey were analysed using descriptive statistics, whilst qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. A summary of the key findings of this project are listed below.

- Trainers who deliver autism training are often using the CCF as intended.
- Autistic people should be at the core of autism training and there is a need for them to be involved in all aspects.

- The main barriers for autistic people being more involved in autism training include: lack of opportunities, support and equal pay, training not being autism friendly, and the stigma associated with autism.
- Participants felt that everyone in society should receive autism training. However, professionals who work in the following settings are in most need of autism training: healthcare, education, mental health, community healthcare, and emergency services.
- The main barriers for professionals accessing autism training include: funding, time, resources, poor content and quality, and a lack of awareness of available courses.
- The training directory highlights autism training courses which currently align to the CCF.
- COVID-19 has facilitated the development of virtual training, with many providers offering this as well as face to face training in future.
- The gap analysis describes seven core themes surrounding gaps in autism initiatives in particular core training content, specialist training for professionals, specialist training content, autistic people involved in training, use of correct terminology, modality of training, and evaluation.
- The Delphi survey indicated that cognitive behavioural therapy practitioners consider autism training to be relevant and needed for enhancing practice and service provision.

The data and findings from this project have numerous implications, and key recommendations are listed below.

Recommendations for Health Education England, commissioners and national governing bodies

1. Provide training for autism training providers to understand the CCF and how to use this.
2. Consider giving accreditation to autism training providers who evidence that their training aligns with the CCF and have autistic people involved in their training.
3. Construct a comprehensive communication strategy to increase awareness of the CCF to the autistic community by using social media platforms and autistic organisations such as the National Autistic Society.
4. There is a need for formal support for trainers who deliver autism training. Further research will be needed to investigate the specific needs of trainers, how they would like support, and what they feel they need support with.

5. Further research is needed to understand how to address barriers to training accessibility in order to enable better upskilling of workforces.
6. Make the CCF the “gold standard” so that employees strive to attend training that meets all the capabilities relevant to their role.

Key recommendations for educators providing autism training

7. Provide more opportunities for autistic people to get involved in training from conception to delivery and beyond.
8. There is a need to support autistic people in becoming trainers to be able to deliver autism training. To address this need, training courses could be developed to help equip autistic people with the necessary skills and confidence to be able to deliver training.
9. Reduce barriers and provide more opportunities to encourage more Autistic people to get involved in training
10. Promote wherever possible if autistic people are involved in the development and/or delivery of training



Contact

Hannah Iannelli



02032286149



Hannah.iannelli@slam.nhs.uk



www.maudsleylearning.com